

From: Freedom of Information

Sent: 22 June 2021 15:34

To:

Subject: Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/21/252)

Dear

Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/21/252)

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 24 May 2021, reference K/21/252.

Your request read:

“I had my interview for medicine at the University of Leeds, and I was unsuccessful. Under the rule of Freedom of information I would like to know what my score was for my interview and what was the minimum score of people this year who got admission.”

Your request for your own score has been responded to separately as a Data Subject Access Request.

The University of Leeds holds the information you have requested under the Freedom of Information Act. However, we are withholding the information we hold under section 36(2)(c) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 36(2)(c) sets out that information is exempt from disclosure if, in the opinion of the organisation's Qualified Person, its release would or would be likely to otherwise prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs. We have outlined the reason for engaging the exemption below, including an explanation of the public interest factors for and against disclosure.

We consider that to release this information would unduly prejudice the applications process. It is essential that applicants do not aim for a specific interview score in an attempt to unduly influence the process. To release information which would be likely to encourage this behaviour would jeopardise our ability to objectively judge candidates and make offers accordingly. Applications must be made based on the candidates' individual merits, and the process is designed to test not only the applicants' academic achievements, but also a range of wider skills which are required for a career in medicine. To pre-empt this process would therefore undermine the process as a whole.

All candidates who are unsuccessful at interview stage are given focussed feedback to enable them to work on future applications. This information is carefully constructed to make sure that candidates do not focus on individual stations or scores as attributes are assessed across different stations and vary between cycles. To focus efforts in this way would in fact be likely to lessen their chances of success at MMI and would therefore not be in their interests.

Furthermore, candidates who attempt to 'learn the test' or 'game the system' may well have short term success (i.e. a score sufficient to secure an offer) but lack the

inherent values and attributes to study medicine. It is therefore important to ensure that candidates are offering an honest account of themselves at interview; it would be imprudent to release information which could increase the likelihood of candidates being coached to pass the selection process, only to struggle while on the course.

As outlined above, to release this information would prejudice the admissions process. It would also be likely to unduly damage the prospects of prospective applicants to the medicine course; disadvantaging genuinely strong candidates who may lose out on places in favour of candidates whose artificially strong applications belie poor overall suitability. Accordingly, we are satisfied that disclosure would be likely to result in prejudice to the effective conduct of our ordinary business. It is therefore the opinion of Professor Simone Buitendijk, the Qualified Person for the University of Leeds, that the exemption is engaged.

As the exemption is engaged, it is also necessary to consider whether the public interest is in favour of withholding or releasing the information.

There is an extremely strong public interest in maintaining the integrity of the admissions process, and in turn protecting the value of the medicine degree offered by the University of Leeds. Allowing the admissions process to be undermined as outlined above would limit our ability to train and develop future generations of health care practitioners and leaders. This would de-value the course, which is recognised as being of extremely high quality and is therefore necessarily selective. This would not be in the interests of applicants and students, who would suffer as a result of the de-valued course. Nor would this be in our interests, as any de-valuing of the course would be likely to result in fewer applications, a reduction in student income and therefore a reduced ability to provide excellent teaching. It is therefore clear that the release of this information would not be in the public interest.

It is therefore the opinion of Professor Simone Buitendijk that the public interest is overwhelmingly in favour of withholding the information.

We hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions about this email, however, please do not hesitate to contact us on foi@leeds.ac.uk

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you can request an Internal Review. Requests for Internal Review should be made in writing using the following contact information:

Post: Mr D Wardle
Deputy Secretary
The University of Leeds
Leeds
LS2 9JT

Email: foi@leeds.ac.uk

Requests for Internal Review should be submitted within 40 working days of receiving the University's response to your request. Further information about how the University manages Freedom of Information requests and about our complaints procedure is also available on our website (www.leeds.ac.uk).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review/complaints procedure provided by the University. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

Chloe Wilkins
Freedom of Information Officer

Secretariat
University of Leeds